

# *LA GUITAROMANIE* (1829) BY CHARLES DE MARESCOT (1790–1842): UNPACKING THE IMAGERY AND MUSIC OF AN ICONIC NINETEENTH-CENTURY GUITAR BOOK

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*La guitaromanie*, or 'guitar mania,' is a small, beautifully constructed book of guitar music by Charles de Marescot (1790–1842) published in Paris around 1829.[1] It is remarkable for the inclusion of six colour lithographs by an artist designated as Mantoux[2] featuring guitarists in a variety of musical contexts. These illustrations have been widely circulated in the late twentieth century,[3] particularly the fifth image ("*Discussion entre les Carulistes es les Molinistes*" – fig. 12) featuring a brawl with rival factions smashing their guitars against each other. Likewise, the book's satirical title has inspired dozens of recordings and become emblematic of the popularity of the instrument in early-nineteenth-century Europe.

Despite being a well-known iconographical source, *La guitaromanie* has received scant scholarly attention. The title is an invented play on words satirising the perceived excessive and obsessive devotion of the guitar's followers. It alludes to the concept of "monomania" that emerged within early-nineteenth-century French psychotherapy and involves fixation, or *idée fixe*.[4] Highlighting guitar fixation,

1 The 1829 date derives from the *Bibliographie de France* no. 47 (Nov 21, 1829), as discussed by Damián Martín, "The Guitarist behind *La guitaromanie*: Charles de Marescot," *Soundboard Scholar* no. 4 (2018): 14. However, in a subsequent article, Martín (now Gil) suggests the possibility of late 1828 publication due to the address listed on the title page. See Damián Martín Gil, "Unraveling the Discussion entre les Carulistes et les Molinistes (Paris, 1820)," *Soundboard Scholar* no. 6 (2020): 11.

2 The artist's name, Mantoux, appears on three of the plates with the inscription "Litho [Lithography]: de Mantoux" and the address "r. du Paon N:1."

3 The original resides at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), Département de la Musique, VM BOB-15691; VM7-3212. The stamp on each plate shows a crown and the initials B.R. (Bibliothèque royale). Compare, for instance, the copy of J.M. Noriéga, *Nouveaux principes pour la guitar …* (Périgueux: F. Dupont, 1833) where the stamp shows the same insignia and the text "Bibliothèque royale" spelt out in full. All six images were reproduced in Frederic Grunfeld, *The Art and Times of the Guitar: An Illustrated History of Guitars and Guitarists* (NY: Macmillan, 1969), then a full facsimile: De Marescot, *La guitaromanie*, *Archivum musicum: L'arte della chitarra tra Settecento e Ottocento* 16 (Firenze: Studio Per Edizioni Scelte, 1985). The book is now assumed to be in the public domain and is available through Petrucci Music Library, https://imslp.org/wiki/La_Guitaromanie_(Marescot%2C_Charles_de).

4 "Monomania" was espoused by French psychiatrist Jean-Etienne-Dominque Esquirol in writings from ca. 1810. See Francesca Brittan, "Berlioz and the Pathological Fantastic: Melancholy, Monomania, and Romantic Autobiography," *19th-Century Music* 29, no. 3 (2006): 220.

the imagery presents a satirical compendium of clichéd musical scenarios featuring the instrument. The iconography and music of *La guitaromanie* hence offer a rare opportunity for sociocultural analysis.

The last decade has seen a flourishing literature on the nineteenth-century guitar that considers illustrative evidence,[5] notably the probing discussions of Christopher Page.[6] Likewise, Jeffrey Noonan's analysis[7] of guitar iconography in the "BMG" era[8] is highly relevant, as the six images within *La guitaromanie* have similarly romanticised qualities. Comparable ideas are applied here in discussions of the illustrations and music that attempt to unpack the use of gender stereotypes and other interrelated cultural conceits – particularly serenade/seduction and the "heroic" pursuits of hunting and battle. These issues are ripe for examination and have not previously been addressed in the scholarly literature within the context of *La guitaromanie*.

Although Charles de Marescot has assumed the place of a significant footnote in the guitar's history, details of his life have long remained unclear.[9] His extant works, which were published in Paris and London, include songs with guitar accompaniment, guitar solos, transcriptions for guitar, and a variety of instructional methods (both practical and theoretical). Marescot soon appears to have dropped into relative obscurity, receiving little attention in reference works of the early twentieth century.[10]

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5 While precedent can also be found in Grunfeld, Ibid., significant recent scholarship includes Andrew Britton, "The Guitar and the Bristol School of Artists," *Early Music* 41, no. 4 (2013): 585–594; Britton, "The Guitar in the Romantic Period: Its Musical and Social Development, with Special Reference to Bristol and Bath" (PhD diss.: Royal Holloway College, University of London, 2010); and Norberto Torres Cortés, "Guitarra popular rasgueda 'pre-flamenca' en la primera mitad del siglo XIX: Fuentes escritas," *La Madrugá: Revista De Investigación Sobre Flamenco* no. 10 (2014): 55–120. Much of the recent guitar research appearing in *Early Music* (too numerous to list) also includes guitar iconography, albeit tangentially.

6 Christopher Page, *The Guitar in Georgian England: A Social and Musical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020); Christopher Page, "Being a Guitarist in Late Georgian England," *Early Music* 46, no. 1 (2018): 3–16; Page, "The Spanish Guitar in the Newspapers, Novels, Drama and Verse of Eighteenth-Century England," *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* 44, no. 1 (2013): 1–18. Also see Page's published lectures (https://www.gresham.ac.uk/), accessed 20 June 2018; including "Being a Guitarist in the Time of Byron and Shelley," (20 Nov 2014); "Harmony in the Lowest Home: The Guitar and the Labouring Poor," (19 Feb 2015); "The Guitar and the Fair Sex," (23April 2015); "The Guitar and the Romantic Vision of the Medieval World," (8 Jan 2015); "the Guitar, the Steamship and the Picnic: England on the Move," (11 Dec 2014); "The Romantic Guitar," (9 Oct 2014).

7 Jeffrey Noonan, "Interlude: The Guitar as Icon," in *The Guitar in America: Victorian Era to Jazz Age* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008): 96–116.

8 BMG stands for Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar, and refers to the amateur plucked string ensembles that proliferated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

9 The website of the *Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris* aptly describes Marescot as a professor (teacher) and editor of music.

10 Marescot is notably absent from Philip James Bone, *The Guitar & Mandolin. Biographies of Celebrated Players and Composers, Etc. [with Plates, Including Portraits.]* (Schott & Co.; Augener: London, 1914). He is mentioned briefly in Domingo Prat, *Diccionario de guitarristas* (Buenos Aires, 1934). Both cited in Martín, "The Guitarist behind *La guitaromanie*," 4.

Recent research by Damián Martín (now Gil)[11] has brought to light a somewhat more complete picture, confirming Marescot's birth, death, marriage, parentage, family military connections, and dates of publications,[12] not to mention his work in Paris as a music teacher and publisher between 1817–1834 and his activity in London from 1834–1842.

Martín also uncovers Marescot's curious relationship with Berlioz, whose letters reveal an ongoing royalty dispute (with Marescot in his role as a publisher). Berlioz enacts his revenge in *Les soirée de l'orchestre*,[13] a collection of humorous anecdotes regarding significant personalities, in which he labels Marescot an *équarisseur* or "knacker" (one who disposes of dead animals) and suggests that Marescot's arrangements "killed and skinned the works of celebrated composers."[14] The Spanish guitarist Fernando Sor (1778–1839) makes a similar comment regarding guitar arrangers (although not necessarily Marescot) who spoiled the harmony through over-simplification.[15]

The musical pieces within *La guitaromanie* comprise an eclectic selection aimed for broad appeal and pitched towards comparative beginners. Works include exotic dances and programmatic pieces alongside more traditional forms. Despite their simplicity, the musical works garner novelty due to their textural variety and vivid characterisations. The addition of illustrations arguably enhanced the book's appeal, making it an amusing collector's item, a nineteenth-century equivalent of a "coffee-table book."[16] This marketing objective raises further questions regarding the exploitation of stereotyped gender identities. Did sexualised imagery of serenade and seduction appeal to both genders? How might women have responded to the preponderance of works depicting male "heroic" pursuits such as hunting and battle?

Arguably, issues of identity and belonging are pivotal to these underlying subthemes. The book self-consciously and satirically depicts guitar fanaticism as a distinctive cultural group (almost a sub-culture),[17] offers a pathway to admittance through musical study, and implies a fictive narrative of romance and seduction that hints at the potential benefits of belonging. The image *"Discussion entre les Carulistes es les Molinistes"* (fig. 12) depicts a test of loyalty in a brawl between two rival factions whose point of difference absurdly rests on a triviality. Tellingly,

11 Martín, 4–16.

12 Martín cross-references with various historical sources, such as contemporaneous listings in the *Bibliographie de la France*. See Martín, 12 ff.

13 Berlioz, *Les soirées de l'orchestre*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, etc., 1854).

14 Berlioz, *Les soirées de l'orchestre*, 57: "Un début dans Le Freyschutz – Nouvelle nécrologique – Marescot – Etude d'équarisseur." Quoted in Martín, "The Guitarist behind *La guitaromanie*," 10.

15 See Fernando Sor, *Fantasie elégiaque* Op.59 (Paris: Chez l'auteur. Pacini, n.d.), available Rischel & Birket-Smith Collection (Royal Library of Denmark).

16 The title page indicates that the book was available in four different formats, each priced accordingly: with ordinary paper or velum, and with/without colour lithographs.

17 It is tempting to designate guitar mania (*la guitaromanie*) a "subculture," except that many of the values projected might be considered historically mainstream, with the exception of the guitar's exotic and erotic associations that potentially subvert social respectability.

despite all the music being for *solo* guitar, the images depict social situations, as if to compensate for the potential loneliness of the solo musician.

The analyses that follow reveal how Marescot's book provides a piquant social commentary. In addition, there are intriguing insights noted regarding the use of the guitar in ensemble, guitars and dancing, and solo guitar performance in a salon context. The discussion proceeds through each image in turn, considering implicit meanings and associated musical content, and paying particular attention to gender politics.

## Plate One: *"La guitaromanie"*

*"La guitaromanie"* (meaning "guitar mania" or "guitar fixation") (fig. 1) is the image that provides the overall collection with its name. As discussed, this title satirises the obsessive devotion of guitar exponents (and perhaps also the heightened popularity of the instrument), likening it to a mental illness. The popularity of the instrument is evident in the room full of guitar-players, and allusion to obsession is made with a glimpse of the now infamous brawl in the adjoining room (which becomes the subject of image five – fig. 12).

Seven out of nine (or perhaps ten) adult guitarists depicted are female, confirming that learning the guitar is a socially acceptable pursuit for women. The additional presence of an infant underscores the participation of a married woman and subtly reinforces the traditional role of women as wives and mothers. Moreover, the number of female participants corroborates recent research[18] and historical evidence intimating that the guitar in this period was associated with fashionable ladies.[19] For instance, in 1892, *The Magazine of Music* quotes a 1791 publication stating that the guitar was "much in use among the ladies of Great Britain,"[20] and in 1895 describes that "in more recent years the guitar fell almost entirely into the hands of the fair sex, and it was looked upon as an indispensable article in the equipment of a lady's drawing-room."[21] While this evidence centres on England, it is arguably broadly applicable to the European continent.

Despite the prevalence of female players, the image ultimately reinforces their subservient role in that the group of females sit beneath the authority of a standing

18 For instance, Page, "Being a Guitarist in Late Georgian England," 3–16, outlines the prevalence of British guitar-playing governesses, while Britton, "The Guitar in the Romantic Period," 99, cites the instrument's gendered association as contributing to the guitar's low esteem and poor press reception.

19 There is considerable evidence that the guitar, at least in England, was associated with women of social standing. For instance, Frank Mott Harrison, in his *Reminiscences of Madame Sidney Pratten: Guitariste and Composer* (Bournemouth W., England: Barnes & Mullins, 1899), 71, discusses the desire of Pratten (preeminent female guitarist) for the instrument to remain a vehicle of social prestige, noting that she even rejected students who were not suitably connected.

20 "A Little About Guitars and Guitarists," *The Magazine of Music* 9, no. 8 (1892): 152.

21 W. B., "How to Play the Guitar," *The Magazine of Music* 12, no. 2 (1895): 31.

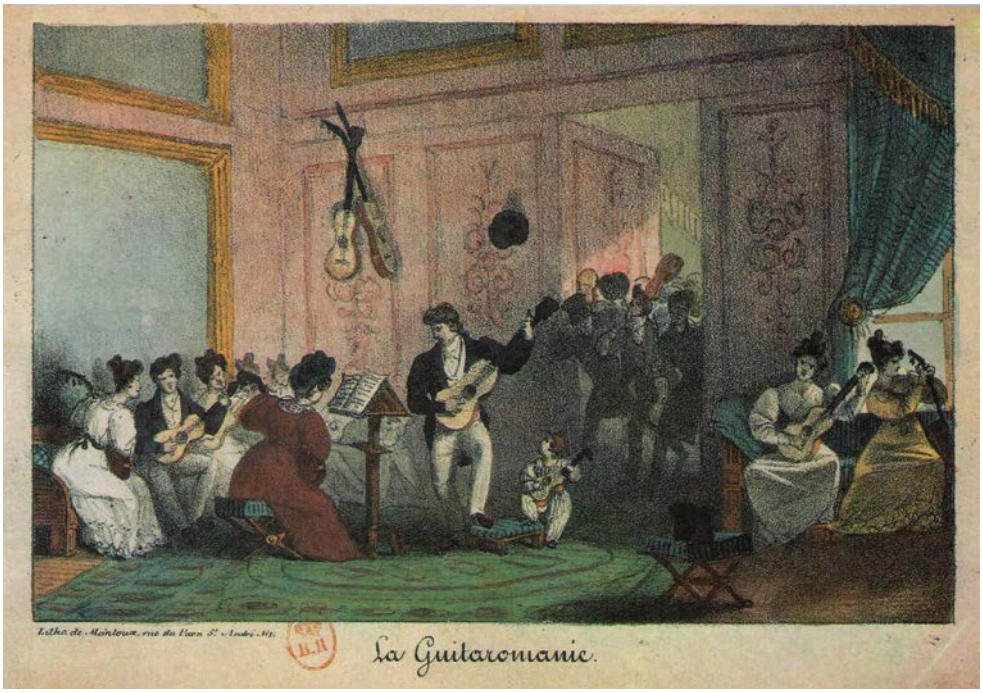


Fig. 1: The first image: *"La guitaromanie."*

male teacher. While the guitar was fashionable among women, their participation was nevertheless limited largely to amateur music-making. Or, more correctly, women were limited to teaching other women while men were free to teach both sexes.[22] Likewise, public performance was generally only acceptable for unmarried women (and usually under female patronage). Lindmaier discusses these limitations through the lens of British virtuosa Madame Sidney Pratten, who was exceptional in being able to sustain a professional concert career throughout a childless marriage.[23] The recently emergent memoirs of Giulia Pelzer (sister of Madame Sidney Pratten) who established guitar at the Guildhall School of Music in 1887, also corroborates how women typically were expected to teach girls and to cease

22 Harrison, in *Reminiscences* lists students of Pratten as exclusively girls (though he probably omitted his own name for reasons of propriety). Jannis Wickhmann names three male Pratten students (among many) and suggests that Pratten made an exception for men who aspired to a professional career. See Jannis Wickhmann, "Pelzer, Catharina, *Catherine*, Josepha, *Josephine*, verh. Sidney Pratten, *Sydney Pratten,"* in Freia Hoffmann [ed.], *Europäische Instrumentalistinnen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, accessed January 14, 2021, https://www.sophie-drinker-institut.de/pelzer-catharina-josepha, (accessed 14 Jan 2021).

23 Hannah Lindmaier, "Die Gitarre – Ein 'Fraueninstrument' des 19. Jahrhunderts? Handlungsspielräume von Gitarristinnen am Beispiel von Catharina Josepha Pratten," *Phoibos-Zeitschrift für Zupfmusik* (2016): 134–154.

performing upon marriage.[24] What is clear is that men continued to dominate the spheres of guitar teaching and professional performance.

Due to the rarity of guitar ensembles of three or more players in this period, the image most likely depicts a group lesson with solo music being played in unison.[25] Indeed, it was likely deemed socially appropriate for women to learn in a group setting within an open public arena, mitigating against possible impropriety. That being said, this gathering foreshadows the popularity of guitar in amateur ensembles towards the end of the century, which were also comprised primarily of women.[26] Moreover, by presenting guitar study as a group activity, it underscores that guitar fanaticism (*la guitaromanie*) offers a sense of shared identity and belonging.

The musical works following the first image comprise "*Rondeau à l'Italienne*," "*Marche*," "*Valse*," and "*Fanfare*." "*Rondeau à l'Italienne"* may reflect the dominance of Italian guitar pedagogues in Paris at this time,[27] as well as the public's devotion to Italian opera. Especially noteworthy are two works with military associations: "*Marche"* and *"Fanfare"* (fig. 2). Both are suggestive of the kinds of public military displays with which contemporaneous audiences would have been familiar.

Programmatic depictions of battle are seen in a small subset of guitar repertoire, while figurations imitating brass fanfares are frequently used to make military references within more traditional musical forms. Battle pieces often employ onomatopoeic imitation of brass fanfares, drums, and other sounds of warfare such as cannon fire in the programmatic recreation of an historic battle – after the fashion of the acclaimed eighteenth-century piano piece *The Battle of Prague* (1788) by Frantisek Kotzwara (1730–1791). Likewise, the *chasse*,[28] which in the nineteenth century became a programmatic depiction of a hunt, also employs similar musical effects. Both battle pieces (*'battaglie'*)[29] and *chasses* arguably make musical representations of traditionally male heroic pursuits.

24 Her memoirs relate that she resumed teaching after fifteen years of childbearing and was never able to resume public performance. See Robert Coldwell (ed.), "Memoirs of Madame Giulia Pelzer," from the Appleby Collection, Guildhall School of Music, www.digitalguitararchive.com/memoirs-of-madame-giulia-pelzer/.

25 See footnote 56.

26 The rise of so-called *estudiantinas* (typically guitar and mandolin) and BMG (Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar) clubs has increasingly become the subject of scholarly attention. Evidence of their largely female membership is marshalled by Paul Sparks, "Clara Ross, Mabel Downing and Ladies' Guitar and Mandolin Bands in Late Victorian Britain," *Early Music* 41, no. 4 (2013): 621–632. The origins of the movement are traced by Michael Christoforidis, "Serenading Spanish Students on the Streets of Paris: The International Projection of Estudiantinas in the 1870s," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 15/1 (2018): 23–26. A detailed study of the BMG phenomenon in the USA is Noonan, *The Guitar in America*.

27 Such as Ferdinando Carulli (1770–1841), Francesco Molino (1775–1847), and Matteo Carcassi (1792–1853).

28 While hunting could be said to have aristocratic associations, the inclusion of at least one *chasse* in *La Guitaromanie* (see fig. 5) is intriguing given the publication of this volume in 1829, near the end of the Bourbon restoration. However, it might be presumed that Marescot had more republican inclinations, given that his uncle (Armand Samuel de Marescot) was a prominent Napoleonic officer.

29 This genre is reminiscent of the sixteenth-century lute *battaglia*.

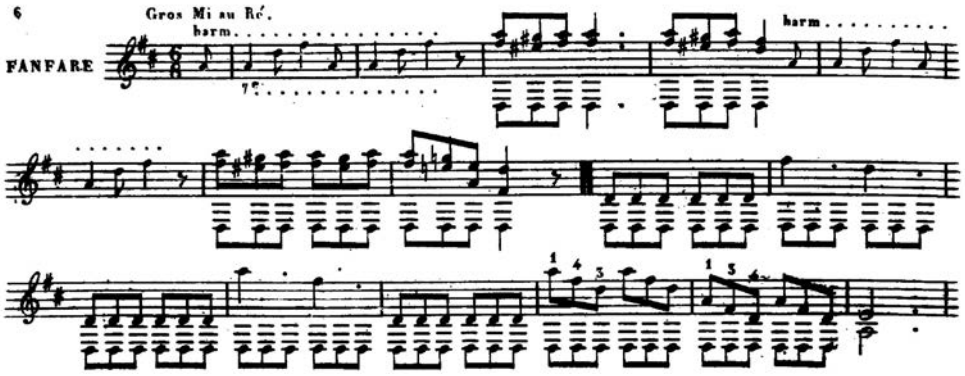


Fig. 2: Tropes of brass fanfares in "*Fanfare*," page 6, lines 1–3.

A common trait of both genres was the use of altered tunings whereby the strings of the guitar are tuned to a single triad – enabling, among other things, the exploitation of natural harmonics to create imitations of brass fanfares. Marescot's works *La Chasse au Renard: A Characteristic Fantasia (or The Fox Hunt)* WoO (ca.1829) and *The French Retreat* Op. 7 (ca.1838) are noteworthy examples, especially in their exploitation of textural contrasts and their incorporation of explicit programmatic score commentary.[30] Both works employ the E major *scordatura* that enjoyed a heyday in England during this era, reflecting Marescot's presence in London from 1834–1842 and his earlier English publishing forays. Comparable works by other composers active in England (which exploit this tuning) include the *Rondo à la Chasse* (1833) by Leonard Schultz (1814–1860)[31] and *The German Retreat* (1842) by Charles Eulenstein (1802–1890).[32] This altered tuning was also adopted in a significant number of works by Madame Sidney Pratten as a means to reach a larger audience. One of her method books is explicitly written for E major tuning, with the preface noting that it is particularly suitable "for those who have little time to practice."[33]

30 Marescot, *The French Retreat* Op. 7 (London: Mori & Lavenu, ca. 1838) and Marescot, *La Chasse au Renard: A Characteristic Fantasia (or The Fox Hunt)* (London: Morei & Lavenu, ca. 1829). Both are available in the Hudleston Collection (Royal Irish Academy of Music). Martín deduces dates by investigating the publisher's address listed and plate number. See Martín, "The Guitarist behind *La Guitaromanie*," 8 (footnote 21).

31 Leonard Schultz, *Rondo à la Chasse* (London: Johanning & Co., ca. 1833). 1833 is given as the date of first performance on the title page.

32 Charles Eulenstein, *The German Retreat* (London: Chappell, 1842). There is also the *Military Divertimento* Op.15 (Bath: published by the author, ca. 1832–33), which uses a G major scordatura.

33 Mme Sidney Pratten, *Instructions for the Guitar Tuned to E major* (London, 1861), 1. Quoted in Deborah Nolan, "The Contributions of Nineteenth-Century European Women to Guitar Performance, Composition, and Pedagogy," (MA diss.: California State University; Fullerton, 1983), 74.

Altered tunings had less provenance in France, although one example appears in the *Méthode complète* (1836) by Matteo Carcassi (1792–1853).[34] There are other continental examples of battle pieces (and other *chasses*), however – such as those of Ferdinando Carulli (1770–1841).[35] Certainly, this was a generation that had experienced the turmoil of the Napoleonic wars, and multiple leading Parisian guitarists had military experience.[36] Marescot himself had close military connections, with an uncle who was a decorated Napoleonic officer.[37] Curiously, battle pieces with altered tunings also became popular in the United States of America,[38] and were prominently featured in many American methods, especially those published by the Oliver Ditson Company in Boston.[39] Carcassi was a possible point of transmission for works with altered tunings, given that Oliver Ditson & Co. released an English edition of his method in 1853. Such tunings most likely also fed into emerging traditions of the early twentieth century, such as Hawaiian steel guitar[40] and blues guitar.[41]

The examples of military tropes in *La guitaromanie* are simplistic in comparison to Marescot's later *chasses* and battle piece (noted above). However, this is possibly the earliest example of natural harmonics used in imitation of brass fanfares, establishing precedent for what became a genre hallmark. In these selections, Marescot arguably achieves maximal effect with minimal effort. While there is no full triadic *scordatura*, he employs drop-D tuning (retuning the sixth string bass note down a

34 Matteo Carcassi, *Méthode complète* (Paris: the author & E Troupenas, 1836).

35 Ferdinando Carulli, *La prise d'Alger. Pièce héroique*. Op. 327 (ca. 1830), and also the politically inspired works *La paix: piece historique* Op. 85 (1815) and *Le trois jours* (ca. 1830).

36 Including Fernando Sor (1778–1839), François de Fossa (1775–1849), and Francesco Molino (1775–1847).

37 See Martín, "The Guitarist behind *La guitaromanie*," 5.

38 For example: Henry Worrall, *Worrall's Celebrated Spanish Retreat,* discussed by Robert Ferguson, "Spanish Retreat, by Henry Worrall." *Soundboard Scholar* (2016): 20–24. Also: Worrall, *Sebastopol: Descriptive fantaisie* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Co., 1860) (also included in his method); Justin Holland *The Celebrated Spanish Retreat* (Cleveland, OH: S. Brainard & Co., 1863); and Charles Converse, *The Spanish Victory March* (Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co, 1882).

39 Examples from the Boston Public Library (available also archive.org) include: Henri-Noel Gilles, *Improved Method of Learning the Guitar or Lyre* (Baltimore: Geo Wilig, 1827); Henry Worrall, *Eclectic Guitar Instructor* (Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co. 1862); Justin Holland, *A Comprehensive Method for the Guitar* (Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1874); N. P. B. Curtiss, *A Progressive and Complete Method for the Spanish Guitar…* (Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1877).

40 Hawaiian steel guitar began by retuning an ordinary guitar, laying it flat, and stopping strings with a steel bar. See *The Original Guckert's Chords… for the Hawaiian Guitar Steel Guitar…* (Toledo, OH: The Union Music Co., 1917). See also Guy Cundell, *Across the Pacific: The Transformation of the Steel Guitar from Hawaiian Folk Instrument to Popular Music Mainstay* (Masters diss.: University of Adelaide, 2014), 26–29.

41 Such battle pieces (and tunings) were perpetuated in the oral traditions of early blues. See David Evans, "The Guitar in the Blues Music of the Deep South," in *Guitar Cultures,* ed. Andy Bennett & Kevin Dawes (NY, Berg: Oxford, 2001), 11–25. See also Alexander Zaitchik, "Talkin' Siege of Sebastopol Blues: How the First Crimean War Helped Create Rock 'n Roll," accessed April 24, 2020, https://www.salon.com/control/2014/03/23/talkin%E2%80%99_siege_of_sebastopol_blues_how_the_first_crimean_war_helped_create_rock_n_roll/.

tone to D), which was beginning to be seen during this period. In "*Fanfare*" (fig. 2), Marescot accesses notes of the D major triad in natural harmonics across the fourth, third, and second strings, without any need for retuning. Indeed, much of this piece consists of representations of brass fanfares – imitated antiphonally near and far, high and low. Triadic figures in "*Marche"* are also fanfare-like, while the pomposity of the surrounding rhythmic figuration is similarly militaristic in nature.

The sociocultural implications of such battle pieces pose intriguing questions. It is tempting to ascribe the penchant for male-oriented "heroic" activities as due to an attempt to re-masculinise[42] an instrument that was dangerously at risk of becoming too feminine. Curiously, Stenstadvold suggests that "music for a woman's instrument needed to adhere to a 'feminine' aesthetic by displaying musical qualities … such as gentleness, simplicity and sentimentality."[43] While this generalisation is not without merit (and certainly reflects the prevalence of the guitar in simple song accompaniments) it does not convincingly explain much of the solo repertoire, especially works inspired by hunting or battle. Rather, as Britton suggests, the soldier was simply one of the primary *topoi* of Romanticism, and (it could be added) an idea that imbued music to be played by men and women alike.[44] Elizabeth Morgan argues that women actually played a significant role in popularising battle pieces in the early nineteenth century (at least in Britain), suggesting that through musical storytelling women could relate to aspects of an otherwise inaccessible male world. Women were thereby allowed to vicariously experience the military conflicts of their menfolk. Through performing battle pieces women "looked beyond the confines of the home to two male-dominated corners of the public sphere, largely unknown to [them] except in their imaginations: the culture of the British military and that of professional virtuoso pianists."[45] She continues: "In performing Kotzwara's work [*The Battle of Prague*], women envisioned and acted out full participation in these parts of the public sphere – and critiqued their exclusion from them."[46]

So, while the musical selections reflect a preoccupation with traditionally masculine activities they can nevertheless still be enjoyed by female musical consumers. Ironically, vicarious participation (via musical re-enactment) echoes the visual separation of women and men in the image; where women are foregrounded in a secure domestic environment and men are seen in the background actively participating in a violent melee. While the guitar is portrayed as a fashionable instrument for women, and guitar fixation is depicted as a group-based activity offering a sense of belonging,

42 The idea that the guitar was a women's instrument was primarily a nineteenth-century phenomenon (though emerging in the late eighteenth century). In the seventeenth century, for example, Stefano Pesori in *Toccate di chitarriglia* (Verona, Andrea, & Frat. Rossi: n.d.) provides a comprehensive list of his pupils (almost 200 in number) that are exclusively male.

43 Stenstadvold, "'We Hate the Guitar,': Prejudice and Polemic in the Music Press in Early 19th-Century Europe," *Early Music* 41, no. 4 (2013): 596.

44 Britton, "The Guitar in the Romantic Period," 140.

45 Elizabeth Natalie Morgan, "The Virtuous Virtuosa: Women at the Pianoforte in England, 1780–1820," (PhD diss.: University of California; Los Angeles, 2009), 79.

46 Ibid.

this mania is also somewhat tamed. Woman's domestic roles are subtly reinforced, reflecting that their musical participation is ultimately limited and ruled by men.

## Plate Two: *"La sérénade"*

"*La sérénade*" (fig. 3) paints an iconic vision of romance and seduction. From Don Juan to Casanova, such scenarios are deeply embedded in Western culture and arguably betray patriarchal power structures. A foregrounded all-male guitar and mandolin group serenades beneath the window of a woman whose face can be faintly seen. Men are the agents of action, both in the wooing and the duel shown faintly in the background. While the woman is seemingly placed in a passive role, this situation might also be viewed as empowering – affording her the power to accept or reject homage, and perhaps a choice between rivals. Despite being theoretically plausible in the early nineteenth century, and broadly accurate in terms of costume (note the pantaloons that were fashionable in this era), this image arguably presents an idealised vision that exploits deeply rooted memes of a romanticised past. Whether fact or fiction, the image capitalises on the iconic power of the guitar as a symbol of exoticism and seductive power.

Likewise, Jeffrey Noonan notes the frequent allusions to serenade in BMG advertising of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; often depicting minstrels, troubadours, or guitarists in period costumes,[47] and mirroring the use of stylised historical dress by professional *estudiantina* ensembles (as described by Christoforidis).[48] Noonan relates: "these depictions allowed readers to dally with the 'primitivist impulse'… to experience vicariously the more intense emotional life of… medieval lovers and musicians."[49] Likewise, BMG iconography exploited sexualised imagery and slogans for marketing purposes, appealing to men's fantasies.[50] Curiously, Noonan argues that BMG advertising also reached out to women through its presentation of strong and fashionable role models.[51] These two competing goals of appealing variously to men and women exist in a precarious tension. Noonan aptly describes such ambivalence:

> The woman guitarist was a significant figure in the BMG community, a figure revered and displayed, but also distrusted as part of the confused and confusing mix of Victorian social conventions, artistic representations, commercial manipulations, and sexual mores.[52]

47 Noonan, "Interlude: The Guitar as Icon," in *The Guitar in America,* 96–116.

48 Christoforidis, "Serenading Spanish Students on the Streets of Paris," 28.

49 Noonan, "Interlude: The Guitar as Icon," in *The Guitar in America*, 100.

50 For instance, Noonan cites a Washburn slogan reading "a summer night, a pretty girl, and above all a Washburn: Guitar, Mandolin, or Banjo, make life worth living." See Washburn instruments advertisement in the *Chicago Tribune*. Quoted in Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 97.

51 Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 111.

52 Ibid., 107.


Fig. 3: The second image: "*La sérénade*."

Such contradictions are also noted by Christopher Page in his public lecture "The Guitar and the Romantic Vision of the Medieval World," where he discusses the exotic allure of the guitar for English audiences, its association with tropes of the medieval troubadour, and the fact that such romanticisation was also marketed to women, however condescending.[53]

The probable marketing purposes of *La guitaromanie* reflect similar tensions, in that the book simultaneously reinforces repressive gender stereotypes and yet exploits scenes of seduction that arguably held contemporaneous appeal to both sexes. While the lure of such overtly sexualised imagery for men is immediately evident, it is presumed that the woman's enjoyment is in imagining herself as the subject of seduction, flattered by attention, and empowered by the choices it offers. Men, however proactive and powerful they may seem, are nevertheless subject to her whims. Moreover, in the image the woman's face is shadowed, a visual technique that undermines any sense of definable character and rather presents a generic symbol of womanhood that invites female identification.

The musical excerpts that follow comprise "*Valse*," "*Bolero*," and "*Chasse*." While the *valse* was an ubiquitous romantic (and arguably erotically-charged)

53 Page, "The Guitar and the Romantic Vision of the Medieval World," (St Sepulchre Without Newgate: Gresham College, January 8, 2015).

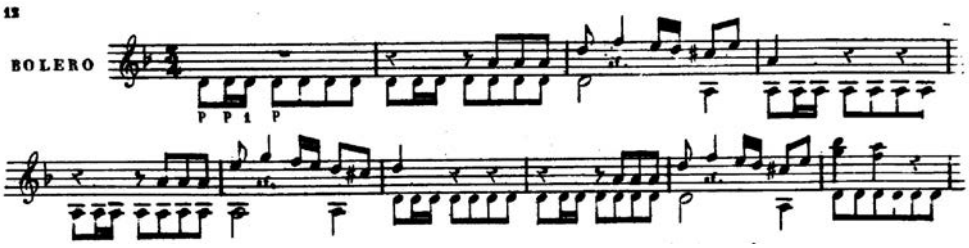


Fig. 4: The opening of "*Bolero*," page 12, lines 1–2.

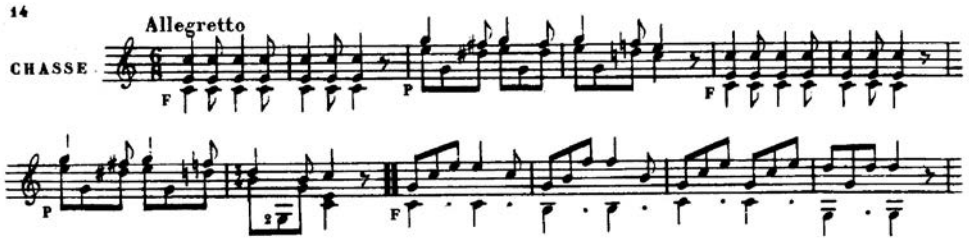


Fig. 5: Tropes of galloping horses (bars 1–2, 6–9), and (possibly) distant horns (bars 3–4), in "*Chasse*," page 14, lines 1–2.

dance of Western Europe in the early nineteenth-century, the inclusion of a *bolero* (fig. 4) could be interpreted as an allusion to the Don Juan tale with its themes of seduction and serenade, as well as to Spain itself as an exotic locale. *Boleros* had become popular in Paris during the early nineteenth century, perhaps a by-product of the Peninsula War. They were included in the programs of prominent singing teacher Manual Garcia and were found in operas by Mehul, Auber, and Berlioz.[54]

The inclusion of a *chasse* (fig. 5) is also noteworthy. Although hunting had aristocratic associations, it could be argued that here the *chasse* simply substitutes as a symbol of masculine outdoor activity. As with the earlier fanfare, this *chasse* is decidedly for a beginning player, but arguably achieves maximal effect with minimal effort. Although fanfare figures in harmonics are curiously absent, little imagination is required to perceive tropes evocative of horses riding (bars 1–2, 6–9) and distant horns (bars 3–4). While the meaning of these musical excerpts remains imprecise, the rhetorical effect of contrasting (even pictorial) motives is strongly felt.

The inclusion of this *chasse* serves to underline that men remain the protagonists, the agents of action in the accompanying illustration. While the theme of rivalry is evident with the duel in the background (which may suggest that the image is a narrative amalgam) there is also an emphasis on group solidarity for those participating

54 Willi Kahl, and Israel J. Katz, "Bolero," in *Grove Music Online (*2001), accessed October 11, 2019.

in the musical serenade. Here, men are offered a sense of belonging and camaraderie (in mutual support of another's romantic aspirations) through their participation in guitar mania, paralleling that afforded to women in the first image. Nevertheless, the precise relationship of this scene to the first remains somewhat undefined. For example, is it the same house? And do the same characters feature? Arguably, a subtle narrative begins to emerge as the six images unfold.

## Plate Three: *"La contradanse"*

"*La contradanse*" (fig. 6) depicts a social dance that could perhaps be interpreted as a continuation of the romantic flirtation. This is, again, a very social situation, but now one that positions men and women as more equal participants. The dance is accompanied by a small group of musicians including three or more guitarists, a violinist, and a person playing percussion (possibly a kettle drum). While most attendees are dancing, some women are seated to the far left being served canapés by a waiter or servant – perhaps suggesting the privilege and authority of these women. Curiously, the dominant musical figure is a woman (guitar in hand, centre right). The view from behind is reminiscent of *Rückenfigur,* an effect common in Romantic painting, particularly that of Caspar David Friedrich, (1774–1840). It evokes identification by replicating the view of the central figure, an illusion which is enhanced by her long shadow. Not only does her female gender reinforce that women are key participants in guitar mania, but the use of the *Rückenfigur* arguably facilitates identification from a female audience.

This illustration also provides rare iconographic evidence of the use of guitar ensemble as an accompaniment to social dancing. This is particularly interesting in that there is minimal evidence of widespread ensemble playing with three or more guitars in surviving music from the first half of the nineteenth century.[55] The depiction of guitars in ensemble is also ironic given that the musical selections are exclusively for solo guitar. Importantly, the visual presentation of guitar mania as a social phenomenon reinforces the message that participation offers identity and belonging.

The dance depicted is a *quadrille*, with the clearly foregrounded square of two couples. The *quadrille* was particularly popular in Paris during the First Empire, that of Napoleon Bonaparte between 1804–1814. All the expected musical components are evident: (i) "*Pantalon"* (trousers), (ii) "*Eté"* (summer), (iii), "*Poule"* (chicken), (iv) "*Trénis"* (substituting for the *pastourelle*), and (v) "*Finale*."[56] Unexpectedly, a sixth movement, "*Valse*," is appended. Despite the simplicity of the works from a technical

55 Guitars were used in various chamber groups in the early nineteenth century, including guitar duo, guitar and flute/violin, and trios of guitar, flute, and violin. However, works for three or more guitars from this period are comparatively rare.

56 Lamb, Andrew. "Quadrille." *Grove Music Online*. 2001; Accessed 11 Oct. 2019. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000022622.


Fig. 6: The third image: "*La contradanse*."

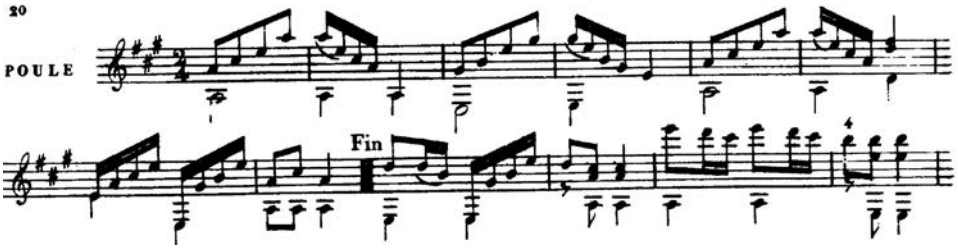


Fig. 7: "*Poule*" [Chicken], page 20, lines 1–2.

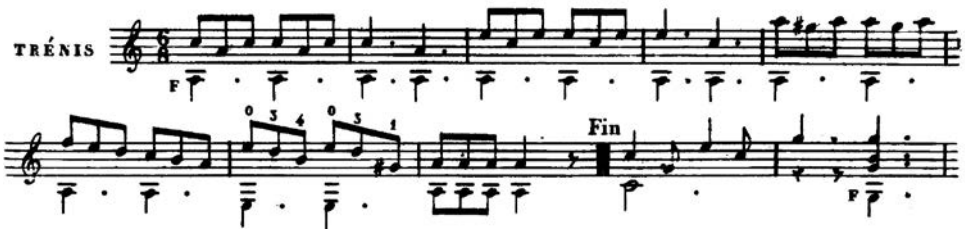


Fig. 8: Hunting horns in "*Trénis*," page 21, lines 1–2.

perspective, Marescot displays an intimate knowledge of the *quadrille*, imbuing each movement with vivid motives reflecting dance character and meaning (such as the comical figuration in "*Poule*," fig. 7). The inclusion of these dances may also reflect that Marescot held republican sympathies (which seems likely given that his uncle was a decorated Napoleonic officer), even though *La guitaromanie* was published near the end of the Bourbon Restoration. Significantly, several works contain tropes of the hunt – including "*Trénis"* (fig. 8) and "*Finale*" – with harmonics for bugle calls that reflect the collection's continuing fascination with masculine, heroic pursuits. These tropes are arguably highjacked here in the depiction of the countryside and a rustic lifestyle, consistent with the origins of the *quadrille*.

## Plate Four: *"L'air varié"*

*"L'air varié"* (fig. 9) represents the epytome of the early nineteenth-century guitar virtuoso, a musical demonstration of techical prowess. Although typical of the period, such vivid iconographical evidence of the guitar in a salon context is unique. A solo male guitarist performs before a small audience of some nineteen people, with a further two standing figures and two waiters on the left. Although superficially resembling a modern concert, the music is not quite demanding everyone's full attention. The lights are on, many are still standing (some engrossed in their own conversations), and a waiter is actively moving into the room carrying a platter full of drinks. The front row of seated women also reflects that salons were typically ruled over by a female hostess. Nevertheless, the image ultimately reinforces the notion that (as previously mentioned) professional performance remained a masculine preserve.

Theme and variations was one of the most common musical forms in the guitar repertoire of this period and a primary vehicle for the exhibition of technical skill. Following the pattern of the genre, the first two variations display increasing rhythmic activity, followed by a movement marked "*Plus lent"* ("*3e. var.*"), though without minor mode. "*Marche"* ("*4e. var.*") and "*Mouvement de valse"* ("5e. *var.*") represent somewhat unusual and exotic additions.

The theme itself (marked "*Allegretto con variazioni"*) is of poignant simplicity, aping the style of an operatic air, complete with a written-out cadenza that is further elaborated in the first and second variations. While the main melody does not appear to correspond to any recognisable opera aria, the glaringly simplistic arpeggio motives convey a fanfare-like character (fig. 10). This militaristic quality, which has been a recurring theme of the entire collection, is also evident in "*Marche*" ("*4e. var.*") and in the second variation ("2e. *var.*"), where the fanfare is amplified by a martial rhythm reminiscent of marching drums (fig. 11). These elements arguably serve to embue the theme and variations with a satirically exaggerated masculine symbolism, consistent with the nature of a masculine demonstration of technical prowess – albeit symbolically conveyed within the range of an elementary technical palette.

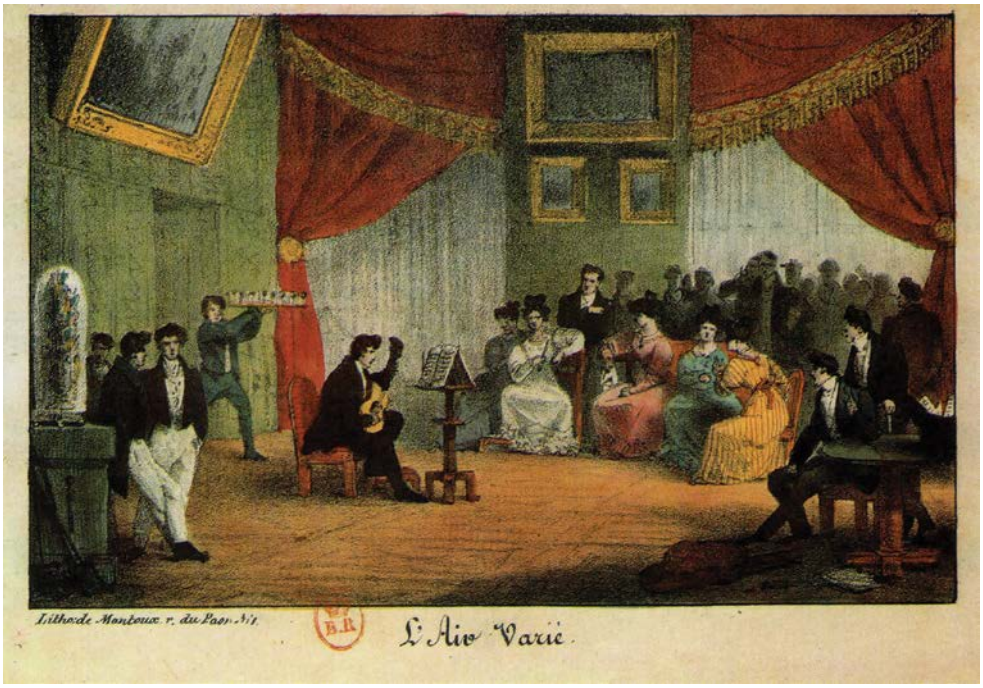


Fig. 9: The fourth image: "*L'air varié*."

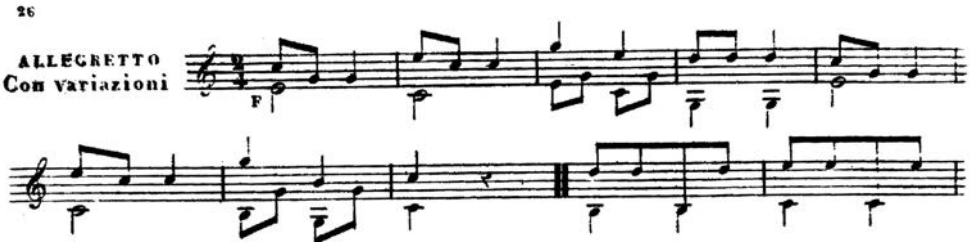


Fig. 10: Brass fanfare figures at the opening of "*Allegretto con variazioni"* (the theme), page 26, lines 1–2.

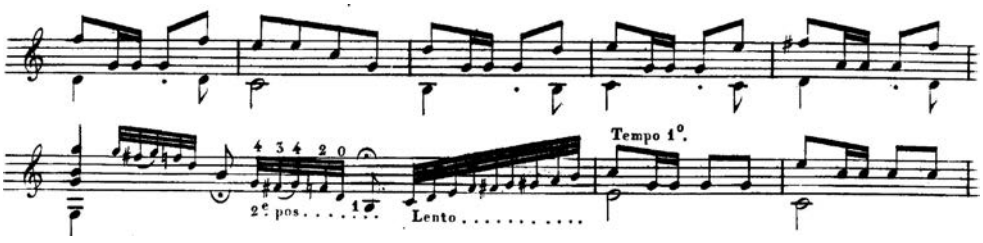


Fig. 11: Martial rhythms (drum-like) in the second variation ("2e. *var.*"), page 28, lines 3–4.

## Plate Five: *"Discussion entre les Carulistes en les Molinistes"*

"*Discussion entre les Carulistes en les Molinistes*" (fig. 12) is the most famous and emblematic image of the collection. The subject of the dispute between the disciples of Ferdinando Carulli (1770–1841) and Franceso Molino (1768–1847), two of Paris's most significant rival teachers, has become a matter of some conjecture. In 1985, Mario Dell'Ara raised the possibility that the dispute hinged on differences of technique. Matanya Orphee argued that the pivotal issue was left-hand thumb technique, specifically the use of the left hand thumb on the fingerboard to stop bass notes – as this was advocated by Carulli but disparaged by Molino.[57] This interpretation has been reiterated by several others.[58] More recently, Gil (previously Martín) makes a comprehensive exploration of the merits of various possible points of difference as well as examining evidence of ongoing professional rivalry.[59] The uncanny resemblances of the opening themes of Carulli and Molino's E minor concertos is one possible evidence of this rivalry, raising the possibility of plagiarism[60] (most likely Molino copying Carulli).[61]

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57 Matanya Ophee, "A Short History of the Use of the Left-Hand Thumb: Some Considerations of its Practical Use in Performance Today," (2008), http://www.guitarandluteissues.com/LH-Thumb/lh-thumb.htm (no longer available); now available at https://www.digitalguitararchive.com/2020/12/a-short-history-of-the-use-of-the-left-hand-thumb/ (accessed January 18, 2021). This possibility was one of several noted by Dell'Ara.

58 Ricardo Barcelo, "Uma Eminência parda na esquerda: a ação silenciosa do polegar na guitarra," [unpublished paper] https://www.academia.edu/23689312/ (accessed 11/10/2019); and Panagiotis Poulopoulos, "The Impact of François Chanot's Experimental Violins on the Development of the Earliest Guitar with an Arched Soundboard by Francesco Molino in the 1820s," *Early Music* 46 no. 1 (2018): 73. See also "Maestros of the Guitar; The Biography of Francesco Molino (1768–1847)," http://www.maestros-of-the-guitar.com/francescomolino.html (accessed on 11/10/2019); Marek Cupák, "Franceso Molino: Werke für gitarre," (Thesis, Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, 2016), http://www.marekcupak.com/wp-content/uploads/francesco-molino_artistic-diploma-thesis_vienna-2016.pdf (accessed 11/10/2019); and Bone, *The Guitar & Mandolin,* 284, who clarifies that Carulli, Carcassi, and de Ferranti all used the left-hand thumb on the fingerboard, as opposed to Sor.

59 While the use of the left-hand thumb on the fingerboard remains perhaps the most prominent issue, other differences include denotations for left-hand positions, instruments, posture, and right-hand fingerings (and their notation). See Gil, "Unraveling the Discussion …," 11–21. Gil's analysis also reveals the professional one-upmanship evident in the various iterations of both pedagogue's method books and professional activities. It also refutes the suggestion that the use of nails versus no nails was a point of difference – an argument reiterated by Dell'Ara in *Francesco Molino: Vita e opera*, vol. 1 (Savigliano: Rosa Sonara, 2014), 23.

60 This independent observation is also noted by Gil in "Unraveling the Discussion …," 14.

61 Maria Torta, *Catalogo tematico delle opere di Ferdinando Carulli* (Italy: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1993) dates the Op. 140 as ca. 1820, earlier than Molino's Concerto Op.56. The precise date of Molino's concerto is unknown, but the opus number places it at least after 1826–27 (the date of Molino's *Supplément a la method,* Op. 47. See Erik Stenstadvold, *An Annotated Bibliography of Guitar Methods*, 1760–1860 (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2010), 5.


Fig. 12: The fifth image: "*Discussion entre les Carulistes en les Molinistes*."

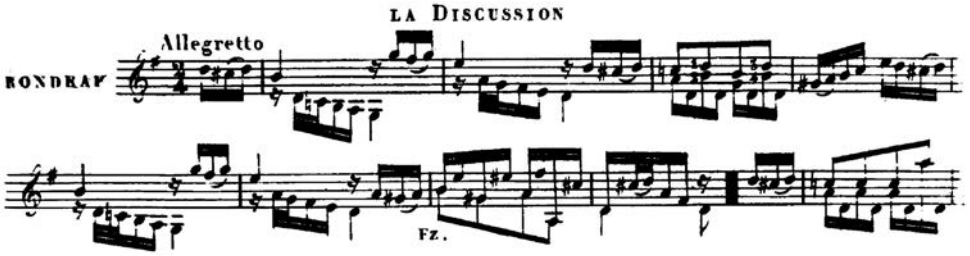


Fig. 13: Frantic activity depicting a brawl in "*La discussion* (*Rondeau: Allegretto*)," page 34, lines 1–2.

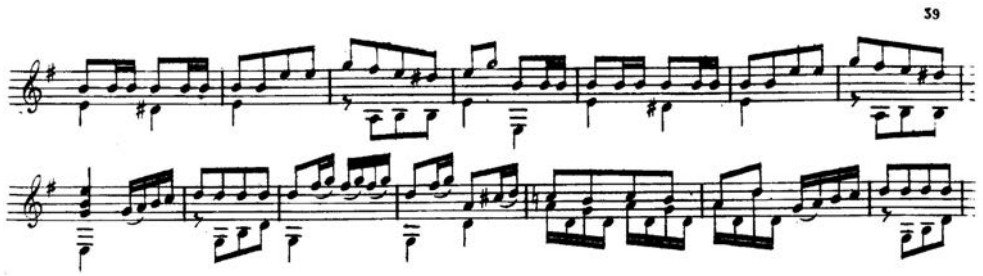


Fig. 14 : Military tropes (drums and fanfare) in "*Rondeau à l'Espagnole*," page 39, lines 1–2.

Whatever real disputes existed, the image depicts a visual hyperbole highlighting exaggerated devotion, a vivid portrayal of guitar mania. This is reinforced by the deliberate and ironic understatement of the text, labelling the image a "discussion" despite the scene being one of extreme violence. In the context of "belonging," the brawl highlights the excessive loyalty of devotees to their sub-group (as disciples of rival pedagogues). Satirical in nature, the scene could be construed as a type of self-deprecating humour. Cartoonish and comical, the image may remind viewers of the theatrical antics of modern rock guitarists. Certainly, the guitar's propensity to incite passionate devotion is an intriguing historical phenomenon. Could it be that the "outsider" status the guitar has often maintained – as an icon of exoticism, youthful rebellion, and ephemera – must be compensated with exaggerated devotion? Also missing from scholarly discourse is the curious absence of women from this scene. Is this dispute simply men's business, too important for women? Or is the joke perhaps intended for women's enjoyment, poking fun at the ridiculous behaviour of men in obsessing over trivialities?

The musical repertoire that follows is similarly entitled "*La discussion*," although it is not entirely clear whether this refers only to the opening piece, "*Rondeau: Allegretto*," or all three movements as a set. There are three pieces, (i) "*Rondeau: Allegretto*," (ii) "*Polonaise*," and (iii) "*Rondeau a L'Espagnole*." There is no attempt to illustrate any point regarding the use of the left-hand thumb. Rather, the opening movement, "*Rondeau,*" (fig. 13) could be said to programmatically depict the frenzied brawl, while military tropes in "*Rondeau a L'Espagnole"* (fig. 14) continue to underscore the masculine notions of brawl and battle through the evocation of brass and drums.

## Plate Six: *"Les délassemens de l'hiver"*

"*Les délassemens de l'hiver*" (or "Winter Recreation") (fig. 15) depicts another scene of musical serenade, with a male playing guitar in the effort to woo a reclining female. The female presumably sojourns within her own boudoir, a very private space, making the presence of the male unchaperoned somewhat risqué (and placing the woman in an arguably empowered role). Indeed, the word "*délassemens*" (recreation) in the title is itself suggestive, a double-entendre. The guitarist's relaxed posture, with legs crossed and the guitar's belly upturned, is also indicative of informality. A sense of intimacy is further enhanced by the fact that the guitarist has replaced his top hat (now resting on the mantel piece) with a night cap. Furthermore, the figures are facing towards each other enraptured, the woman leaning in attentively. As with "*La sérénade*," the guitar features as an agent of seduction and potential moral subversion.[62]

62 The neoclassical décor (complete with classical bust) and lady's possibly Napoleonic dress may also reflect Bonapartist (and republican) sympathies.

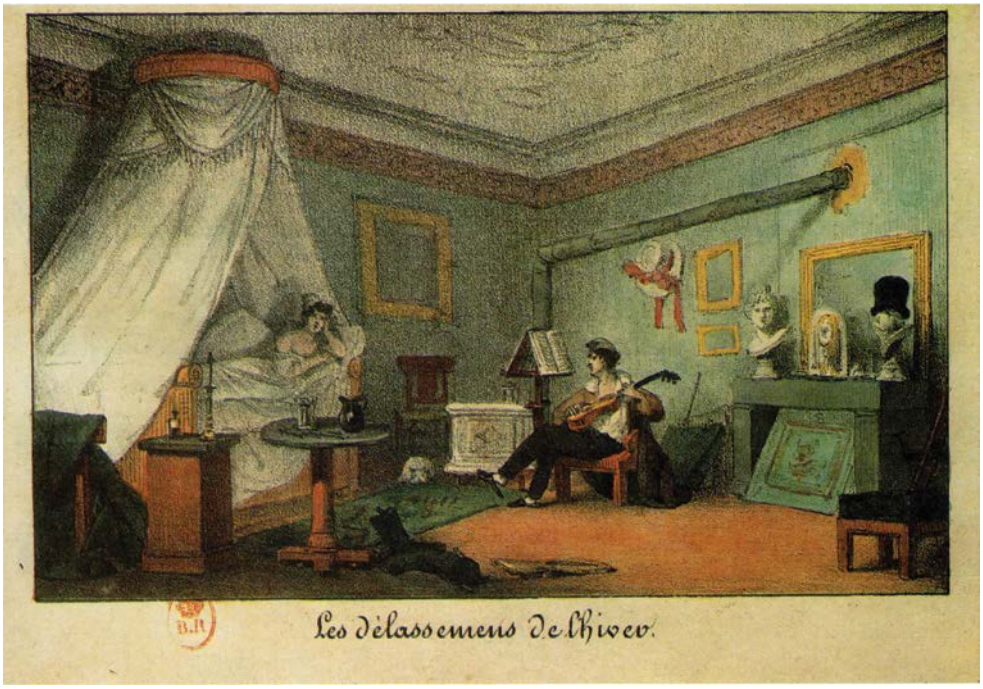


Fig. 15 : The sixth image: "*Les délassemens de l'hiver.*"

The musical selection comprises a catalogue of musical studies, a warm-up routine of scales, arpeggios, octaves, and sixths (fig. 16), preceding a short program containing two waltzes and a two-movement work, "*Sonatine*." These musical excerpts betray no hint of intimacy, however, but rather allude to vigorous physical activity. They present a compendium of guitar "party-tricks," both idiomatic and playful, including: (i) dance-like rhythms; (ii) the use of melodic glissandi (the first "*Valse"*); (iii) cross-string textural effects – an alternation of unisons on different strings for enhanced resonance (the second "*Valse"*); (iv) oscillating mordents using left-hand slurs (the first "*Valse*"); and (v) harmonics (the second "*Valse"*). It might be imagined that the male figure is exhibiting both his technical accomplishment on the guitar as well as alluding to his physical prowess in dancing and outdoor pursuits.

Reinforcing this notion of masculine display is the continuation of heroic music, with a prominent fanfare figure in the two-movement work, "*Sonatine*," as well as martial rhythms reminiscent of drums. Horn calls also feature prominently in "*Rondeau pastoral*." With this title, it might be tempting to assume that Marescot intended shepherd's horn rather than hunting horns, although the energy and activity evident is arguably more consistent with a hunt. It concludes with a gentle fade-out (*smorzando*) (fig. 17) in which the horn calls are reiterated progressively softer, as if the hunt gradually recedes into the distance.

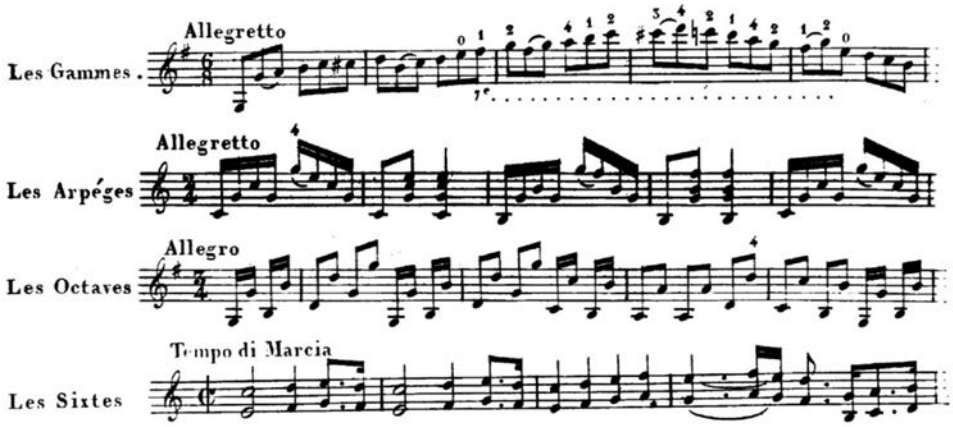


Fig. 16 : Opening incipits from four preludes/exercises: "*Les gammes*," page 42; "*Les arpéges*," page 43; "*Les octaves*," page 44, and "*Les sixtes*," page 45.

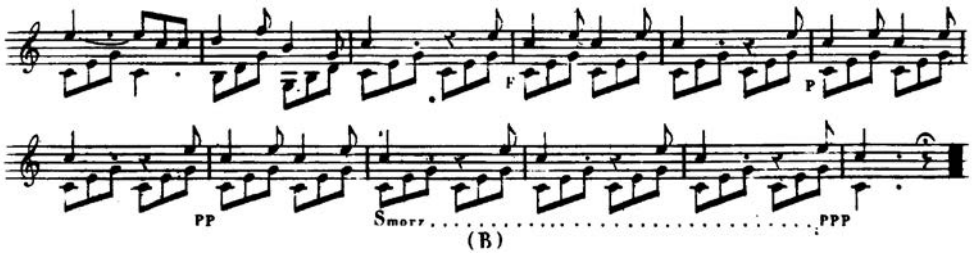


Fig. 17: The gentle fade-out in *Rondeau pastoral*, (second page), page 51, lines 4–5.

Viewing the six images across *La guitaromanie* together as a series, it is tempting to perceive an implicit underlying narrative – one that is predicated on the possibility that the same male character features throughout. Themes of male authority (in "*La guitaromanie*"), physical/musical/sexual prowess (in "*L'air varié*"), and competition (in "*Discussion …*"), particularly in efforts to win the heart of a lady (in "*La sérénade*" and to some extent "*La contradanse*") recur across the set. Seen in this light, "*Les d'elassemens de l'hiver*" could be interpreted as the reward for the victorious gentleman who finally wins the lady. As with the previously mentioned BMG iconography, this subtle underlying narrative exploits sex for advertising purposes, selling the message that participation in and belonging to guitar mania brings multiple benefits.

## Conclusion

*La guitaromanie* will no doubt continue to fascinate modern observers for years to come. Despite the fanciful nature of certain images, the book provides a vivid window into the nineteenth-century guitar and its musical contexts. The illustrations provide a veritable diagnostic compendium of the various forms of guitar "mania." As noted throughout, the imagery portrays this fixation as a social phenomenon (despite the solo nature of the musical excerpts) and possibly presents a fictive narrative vivifying the potential benefits of belonging through an affirmation of sexual potency. Consistent with its milleau, however, the representations of gender roles are rife with contradictions and ambiguity. *La guitaromanie* simultaneously confirms the social acceptability of the guitar for women, while also reinforcing its exoticism and erotic potential, thereby balancing social propriety and scandal. The arts of seduction and the preoccupation with "heroic" pursuits that thread across the collection, variously celebrating and comically satirising such activity, can paradoxically appeal to both men and women (at least within the context of heterosexual gender roles). Women may fantasise about being the subject of male romantic attentions, and the power this affords them. By the some token, men can be drawn into the propsect of wooing a young lady with their musical accomplishments; be they serenades, dancing, or virtuosic displays. And as suggested by Morgan, a young female audience can vicariously enjoy such depictions of male "heroic" pursuits, not to mention the male-dominated experience of virtuoso concert performance.[63] Ultimately, this collection, with its satirical illustrations and colourful musical examples, remains something that cannot be taken too seriously. *La guitaromanie* was always intended to be little more than a spot of fun.

63 Morgan, "The Virtuous Virtuosa," 79.